

NEWS RELEASE

For Statewide Distribution



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Iowa's Unemployment Rate Drops to 3.2 Percent in February

DES MOINES, IOWA – Iowa's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped to 3.2 percent in February. The state's jobless rate was 3.8 percent one year ago. The U.S. unemployment rate decreased to 4.7 percent in February.

"Iowa took another step towards full employment with the unemployment rate dropping to its lowest level since 2001," said Beth Townsend, Director of Iowa Workforce Development. "A large number of Iowans found work in February. This was evident in the establishment survey which showed Iowa businesses added 3,000 jobs this past month."

The number of unemployed Iowans decreased to 53,600 in February from 56,900 in January. The current estimate is 10,600 lower than the year ago level of 64,200.

The total number of working Iowans increased to 1,639,700 in February. This figure was 2,700 higher than January and 1,900 higher than one year ago.

Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment

Iowa businesses again expanded in February, adding 3,000 jobs and lifting total nonfarm employment to 1,580,400 jobs. Last month's employment experienced a moderate revision downward and this month's gain helps recover much of the drop. Private sectors were responsible for all of the growth this month as government shed jobs (-500) primarily at the local level. Despite this loss, government remains up 800 jobs annually and the state combined is up 10,900 jobs.

Among private sectors, education and health services added 1,800 jobs in February to lead all sectors. Education added the majority of the jobs (+1,300), although healthcare also expanded their payrolls (+500). Construction added jobs this month (+1,600) and this month's gain could signify an earlier than usual start to the building season. Other gains this month included professional and business services which added jobs for the fourth-consecutive month, and finance which has steadily trended up since August. Losses this month were limited to just three sectors and led by leisure and hospitality (-900). This sector pared jobs evenly in both recreational activities and hospitality and eating and drinking places. Despite the monthly loss, this sector has fared well and added jobs annually (+2,000). Alternatively, information services again trended down this month (-400), as did manufacturing (-200) due to cutbacks in durable goods.

Annually, total nonfarm employment continues to slowly add employment and has been fueled by hiring in professional and business services (+4,200). This sector alone has been responsible for 39 percent of all annual job gains in the state. Finance continues to grow its footprint in Iowa and is up 3,000 jobs versus last year. Other sectors experiencing growth annually include trade and transportation (+2,400), education and health services (+2,000), and leisure and hospitality (+2,000). Annual losses have been largest in manufacturing (-4,000) and wholly limited to durable goods factories. Information is the only other sector to pare jobs versus last year (-1,400).

Employment and Unemployment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

	February 2017	January 2017	February 2016	Change from January 2017	February 2016
Civilian labor force	1,693,300	1,693,900	1,702,000	-600	-8,700
Unemployment	53,600	56,900	64,200	-3,300	-10,600
Unemployment rate	3.2%	3.4%	3.8%	-0.2	-0.6
Employment	1,639,700	1,637,000	1,637,800	2,700	1,900
U.S. unemployment rate	4.7%	4.8%	4.9%	-0.1	-0.2

Nonfarm Employment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

Total Nonfarm Employment	1,580,400	1,577,400	1,569,500	3,000	10,900
Mining	2,400	2,400	2,100	0	300
Construction	80,400	78,800	80,300	1,600	100
Manufacturing	211,000	211,200	215,000	-200	-4,000
Trade, transportation and utilities	318,500	318,100	316,100	400	2,400
Information	21,500	21,900	22,900	-400	-1,400
Financial activities	110,700	110,500	107,700	200	3,000
Professional and business services	142,400	141,400	138,200	1,000	4,200
Education and health services	230,700	228,900	228,700	1,800	2,000
Leisure and hospitality	144,400	145,300	142,400	-900	2,000
Other services	60,600	60,600	59,100	0	1,500
Government	257,800	258,300	257,000	-500	800

Unemployment Insurance Claims for Iowa

	February 2017	January 2017	February 2016	% Change from January 2017	February 2016
Initial claims	9,164	15,756	10,177	-41.8%	-10.0%
Continued claims					
Number of claimants	41,939	47,551	43,595	-11.8%	-3.8%
Weeks paid	142,543	150,958	148,211	-5.6%	-3.8%
Amount paid	\$55,064,852	\$57,748,242	\$54,851,063	-4.6%	0.4%

Visit www.iowalmi.gov for more information about current and historical data, labor force data, nonfarm employment, hours and earnings, and jobless benefits by county.

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MEDIA ALERT: An audio cut of comments about Iowa's labor market situation is available by calling (515) 281-6057. Statewide data for March 2017 will be released on Friday, April 21, 2017. Local data for March will be posted to the IWD website on Tuesday, April 25, 2017.